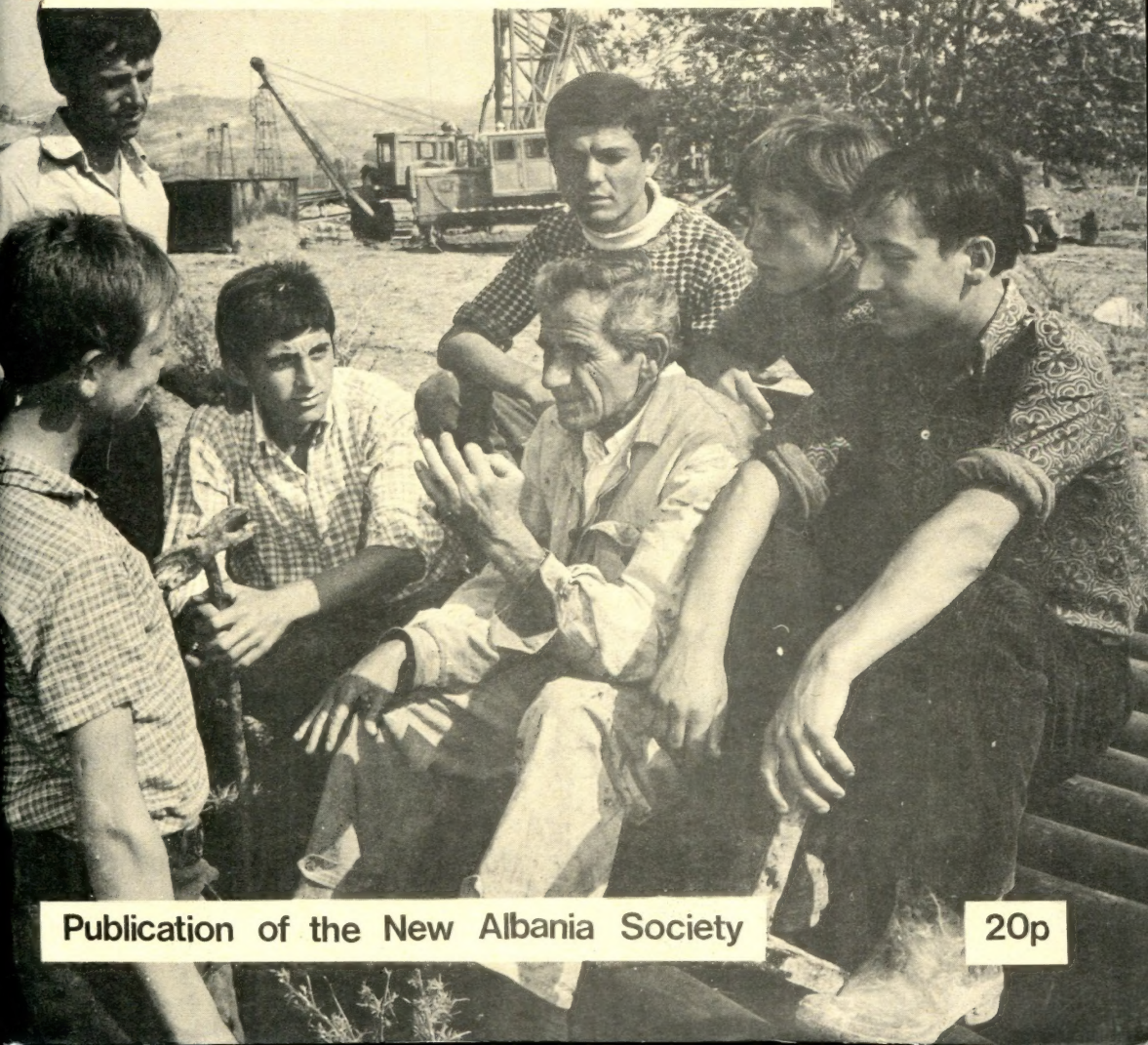


Albania, the most successful country in Europe



Publication of the New Albania Society

20p

Speech of Reg Birch, Chairman of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) at the 7th Congress of the Party of Labour of Albania on November 1st, 1976.

Comrade Chairman and Comrades,

On behalf of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), on the 35th year of your Party and at the time of your 7th Congress, we bring greetings and are honoured to have been invited. We are happy to be here.

So important, not for Albania alone but for all Europe, especially Britain, is the success you are sure to achieve. You are, as a nation, led by the Party of Labour, a Marxist-Leninist Party under the direct tutelage of Comrade Enver Hoxha, a banner-bearer of revolution, socialism and Marxism-Leninism. In this period you are the only successful country and people in all Europe. We have been indebted to you since 1960 because our Party was begun on the signal speech of Comrade Enver in 1960. So your understanding of Marxism-Leninism not only gave the signal to us, but every day and every year since, your persistence, tenacity and movement toward workers' total emancipation have given us courage to carry on and above all to pledge for revolution in Britain and to emulate you. Your stand, together with the Communist Party of China led by Chairman Mao Tsetung, against revisionism brought the workers of the world out of a slough of despondency.

The key to revolution is the struggle for independence in one's own land. Down with all imperialist military and economic blocs! Down with the Warsaw Pact and down with NATO! To know one's enemy and to confront it is our first and basic task. Socialism in Britain will be achieved only by revolution just as in Albania, through the working class. We are dedicated as a Party to that task and we borrow from your strength and success. We do not go to bed with the bourgeoisie. To wage this battle and to succeed can be our greatest international contribution. The British working class and its Marxist-Leninist

Party cannot rest on the struggle and sacrifice of other workers in other lands across the world. It is where we live that counts. No excuses and diversions shall prevail.

The test of a revolutionary working class in Europe today is in its understanding of the greatness and historic contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to revolution and socialism, of the Albanian people. Just as in October 1917 and for all the years of the Bolshevik Revolution, the test of class understanding of Marxism was the attitude to the Bolshevik Revolution, now the test is the attitude to Albania. Albania is not alone, nor are the workers of Europe ever without a champion and friend while there is Albania.

Success to your Congress and long live Comrade Enver Hoxha.

This pamphlet has been written from the joint experiences and observations of the 1976 delegation to Albania of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). The delegation was led by Reg Birch, Chairman of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

Chapter 1

Building Socialism - agriculture and industry

Our delegation arrived in Albania at night and although we were to meet and talk to many Albanians that evening, we did not get a real look at the country itself until the next day. What we saw then and for the rest of our visit was the landscape of a socialist country. We had never before imagined that socialism would be such a visible, tangible thing. Albania is a beautiful country of mountains, valleys and a narrow coastal plain, but her real beauty is not just a matter of physical features, but is a socialist beauty.

As we drove across the countryside and the mountains we saw oil wells, power stations, textile mills - all kinds of factories. The land is richly cultivated in cooperatives and state farms, and not a metre of it is wasted. We saw great expanses of maize, cotton, cereals, sunflowers, olive trees, citrus fruits, tobacco, as well as livestock. We could hardly believe what we knew to be true - that before Liberation in 1944 Albania was the most backward the most primitive country in Europe. There was no education for the people, therefore no skills and no industry, a land of bare rock, swamps and barren wasteland where starvation, misery and death were a normal part of everyday existence for the people.

When we visited some of the agricultural and industrial enterprises which make up the wealth of Albania, the workers and peasants explained and demonstrated to us that the key to this enormous change has been the socialist principle of self-reliance.

Self-reliance in agriculture means firstly that Albania seeks to provide herself the agricultural needs of her people. Instead

of allowing market garden produce to predominate over other foods and thereby becoming dependent on the Soviet Union, as Krushchev suggested, Albania has developed a multi-branched agriculture, with priority given to the production of bread grains.

This national self-reliance means that each section of industry and agriculture must also rely on the initiative and efforts of the people who work in it. If the people themselves were not the guiding force, such national independence would be impossible. In 1966 the slogan was put forward to make the hills as fertile as the plains. In a socialist country there can be no interest in waste, so every possible area of land must be used. Also, in the event of war, food must be available in the mountains as well as the plains. The Albanian youth responded to this slogan, and took the initiative of terracing the mountains. When we visited the South of Albania, we saw some of the breathtaking results.

This was during a visit to a terraced farm in the very mountainous district of Saranda. We stood high up on a parapet surrounded by a flower garden, and looked down all round us at a range of mountains rolling down to the sea. We saw that the sides of these mountains had been carved out into steps, and a tunnel cut 2500 metres through another mountain to a lake where a dam and hydro-electric power station are being built. The terraces were all cut at such an angle that the water for irrigation flowed down each level separately, and only around the roots of the citrus trees which grew there, so that no water is wasted. 30,000 young people came from all over Albania to work on this project, and to build a small port to transport the produce. Villages in the region now have running water for the first time, and 500,000 citrus and olive trees now grow where before was only scrub and wasteland.

Our Albanian hosts modestly said that this achievement was not yet good enough, and the target is 1,000,000 trees. They explained that before Liberation this area was so poor that people only moved away if they could; now there is so much to

do that people are moving back - new life has come to a whole district. Only in a socialist society where the needs of the people come first could such a project be conceived and completed, by relying on the people themselves. Here in Saranda we began to appreciate the true beauty of Albania's landscape.

When we visited a cooperative farm in Korca, the workers told us basically how agriculture is organised in Albania, in cooperative and state farms. A farm is a collection of a number of villages and their land into a productive unit. Cooperative farmland is owned collectively by the villagers, who sell their produce to the State, and live on and re-invest the proceeds. If some of the villages have poorer land and poorer produce than others, their income is not therefore less - all the income is distributed evenly throughout the farm. The cooperative farm keeps a reserve fund from production, so that in the event of bad weather or other productive problems the cooperative farmers, on this particular farm for instance, could still be paid for eight months.

The state farm is the highest form of agricultural organisation. All the land and therefore all its produce belongs to the State, and the workers receive a wage regardless of any fluctuations in production, like any other worker in industry. The state farms are the most efficient units of agricultural production. They are highly mechanised and fulfil their own needs; for instance they have their own technical workshops for maintenance and repair of all farm machinery.

The target is that eventually all agricultural land should be organised in state farms, but, as the Korca cooperatives explained, there is no compulsion involved in the transition from one to the other. The cooperative members must themselves want to become a state farm - the initiative must come from them to increase and improve production to the level required for a state farm. When they achieve this, then the farm passes through a transitional phase and becomes a "high-type" cooperative farm where the land is owned mostly by the state, but partly still by the cooperativists. Their income is made up of

90 per cent wages from the state and 10 per cent from the sale of their own collective produce. In all cases, the villagers themselves take part in discussions and decisions about the running of the farm, and how to improve production.

The results of this self-reliance, of working together for the common good whether at the cooperative or state farm level, speak for themselves. When we visited the Stalin Poshnje Cooperative farm in Southern Albania, we were given a vivid demonstration by the workers how much can be achieved in this way. Since 1952 when the cooperative was formed, production has grown and grown. Wheat yield has increased from 8-10 quintals per hectare in 1952 to 37 quintals per hectare now, maize from 11-22 to 50 quintals per hectare, cotton from 5-7 to 12 quintals per hectare. There are now 450 cows with an annual yield of 2000 litres of milk per cow, where before there were none.

The achievements of this farm were not only those of production. Where before Liberation the position of women was that of inferior beings with no rights and certainly no chance of fulfilment at work, now they comprise 45 per cent of the management of the farm. The politics of real emancipation for women go hand in hand with the need to increase and develop production. The great potential of Albanian women in terms of skill and initiative was wasted before, but now it is used to the full both for the benefit of society as a whole and to ensure women's rightful place in building socialism.

Everywhere we saw evidence of the position of women in New Albania, and we had to remind ourselves that 40 years ago many of the mothers of these confident, dignified young women were virtual prisoners in their own homes, having to wear a veil if they went out in public in accordance with Islamic custom.

This struck us most forcibly when we visited the huge metallurgical combine at Elbasan. Our very first impression as we approached was of its immense size and that this reminded us of Britain (as it used to be!). First we paid a visit to the blast furnace, and immediately three young women, laughing and

confident, came up to us and introduced themselves. One was a welder and the other two were engineers on the blast furnace, all three highly-skilled workers. They told us that 25 per cent of the workers there were women, and they took us to meet their friend. We stood and watched this young woman at her work, manipulating the controls over a huge vat of liquid iron, pouring it into moulds. The experience of meeting these young women demonstrated more vividly than any statistics, interesting though they are, what the socialist liberation of women really means. When we subsequently went to sit and drink coffee with some of the workers of Elbasan, we noticed how forward and self-assured the women were in answering our questions, and in asking us about Britain.

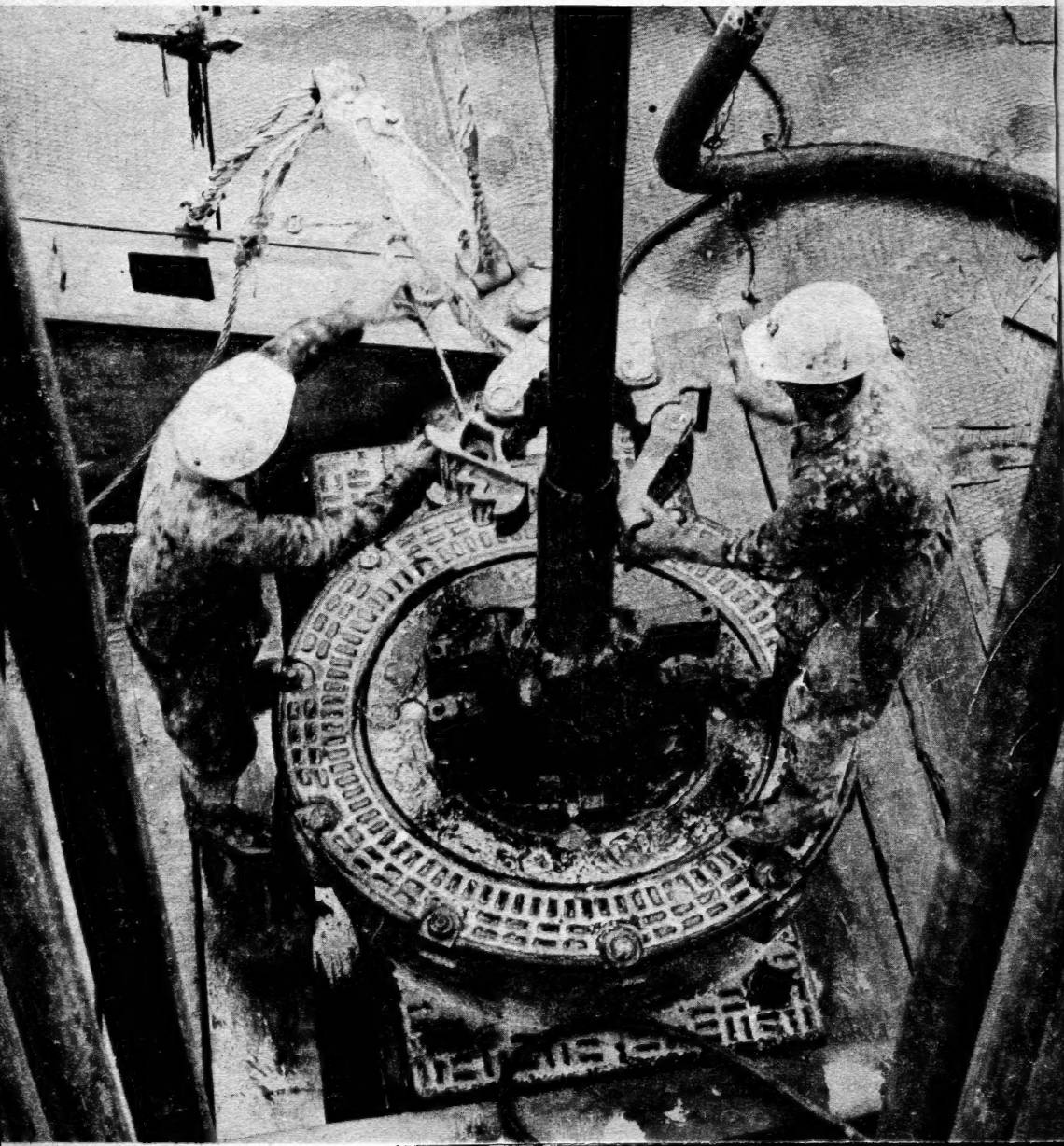
The workers explained to us that the initiation of the Combine in 1972 was described by Enver Hoxha as a second Liberation for Albania, because of the enormous step forward it represents for Albanian self-reliance to produce her own iron and steel. The blast furnace went into operation for the first time in March 1976, so we felt honoured to see it in action just a few months later. Mechanisation and automation there is of world standard, as one of our group - a foundry worker himself - confirmed. Only Albanian minerals are used, and there were doubts at first as to the quality of the pig iron. In fact it is better than what was previously imported, and fulfils all the needs of the economy. 80 per cent of the equipment is self-produced. The steel plant, of which our hosts were justly very proud, goes into operation this year. Imagine this just four years after construction of the site was begun!

Great attention was paid to safety and working conditions at Elbasan. We saw sophisticated instruments which detect the level of exposure to fumes, and, in case they develop faults, doves are also used as back-up precaution. There have been no serious accidents at all at the plant.

Above all, there was a great feeling of freedom as we were shown around and talked with the workers at Elbasan - a completely different working atmosphere to any we had known

before, in Britain, which convinced us that the working class is truly in control.

Albania has one major claim to success. She is now an oil exporting country. Oil actually seeps from the ground especially around Patos and Stalin City areas, and new fields have been discovered. With all the other valuable minerals available Albania would indeed be a prize for any invader.



In Albania we learnt a very important lesson - that nobody is irrelevant or superfluous to the building of socialism. Every resource of the people is used and developed, everyone has something to offer to the construction of the new society. This reliance on the people's own efforts is not only central to the economy of socialism, but also to its democracy, for it entails trust and confidence in the people.

Many of the industrial and agricultural projects, which we saw in completion, must have seemed like madness when they were first conceived. How can a country of mountains and swamps become self-reliant in food? How can a country with no metallurgical industry aim to produce all its own iron and steel within a few years? We saw the answer in Albania - that anything is possible for a liberated and united people, determined to build a new society to serve their needs, and to rely on their own efforts to achieve it.

Chapter 2

A rising standard of living

Before going to Albania we had heard that it was a country without inflation, without unemployment, without taxes, without a general economic crisis. How could this be in a Europe rapidly entering severe economic chaos? There are no crises in Albania. The very nature of Socialist order where objective economic laws of socialism operate and where, as a result of careful management, economy and culture develop on the basis of a unified state plan, and in compliance with the interests of the people, has made it possible to develop production systematically; unlike capitalist countries where anarchy in production, economic crises and unemployment are rife. The stability of the currency is guaranteed by the amount of goods the state puts on sale at fixed planned prices. The people therefore are able to buy all the necessities in quantity and range at unified prices all over the country. The state budget is carefully balanced so that its income is always larger than its expenditure.

Even though Albanians do not have enormous numbers of labour-saving gadgets, cars and expensive hi-fi equipment, we were surprised at the high standard of living we saw there. Food, for example was plentiful and in good variety. The most obvious differences were the prices. Not only of food, but in clothes, transport, holidays, rents, everywhere they were low. Rents are only a fraction of the worker's wage - 1.5 per cent to 3 per cent of the family income for the monthly rent. Again, payment for water, electricity and other services are mainly symbolic. Prices in Albania are stable and the policy is always to reduce them as production rises. From 1950 to 1970 the prices of mass consumer goods were reduced thirteen times with a profit of more than one billion leks. Since then prices have fallen another eight to twenty five per cent. Under a planned

economy there is no wastage so the profits are greater.

This year a dramatic new decision has been taken to lower the higher wages. At first sight one's reaction may be why not increase the lower wages? But the aim is to narrow the differences between the levels of income while also decreasing the desires of the people to earn more money. Socialist man needs not the inducement of financial reward to increase production but the convictions of his ideology to build a better society for himself and his people. Comrade Enver Hoxha stresses, "Living standards should not be allowed to rise with big differences, officials should not be allowed to live far better than the workers and the peasants to live at a lower standard than their allies in the city. Our Party is fighting and will always fight unceasingly to improve the life of the people ...".

As is suggested here the wages of those working in town and countryside have been brought closer together, and therefore help unite these two different areas. No one is made to feel less important than another. Talking to workers in the factories they welcomed this new move to greater equality. Wages in Albania provide a comfortable way of life whereas so many of us here scarcely manage to make ends meet from one wage packet to the next.

Very important for those at work, and those unable to work for various reasons is the Social Security Fund. Provisions are made in the Constitution for pensions for the aged and infirm, plus related amounts for length of service, merits while at work and also family pensions. All citizens in employment are provided with the material means of livelihood in case of temporary disability because of illness, quarantine, accident or maternity leave. The State also provides assistance to protect their health in sanatoria and preventative treatment centres, for medical treatment in places with special climate and thermal and mineral waters, food for diet canteens, rest in holiday homes for workers and their families, rehabilitation for work, childbirth etc. The Albanians attempt to cover every possibility and by their foresight have sufficient funds to meet these

requirements. The money for this Social Security Fund is contributed by the state enterprises, institutions and social organisations at the rate of eleven per cent over and above the pay of industrial workers, two per cent over and above the cooperative farm workers' pay, plus the amounts allocated in the State Budget. Nothing is deducted from the workers' pay.

Very full leisure facilities are found everywhere in Albania, as they believe in keeping fit and healthy. Holidays are realised to be an essential part of life, for relaxation and recharging the body and mind. The Social Security Fund helps in supporting the many holiday resorts. Generally the annual holiday is two weeks, but longer is given to those working in dangerous or difficult jobs. The resorts are organised by the



Trades Union Organisation and are found in all the beautiful places from the sea to the mountains. We visited a Workers' Rest Home built near Korca, set in beautiful surroundings with a marvellous view of that lovely old town. The buildings were well planned and built. Here there were facilities for skiing during the winter. It was very cheap to stay there - the workers only have to pay a quarter of all the expenses, even less for children and during off-peak holiday periods. Also there are hundreds of day camps for children in particular scenic spots.

We were very impressed by the enormous amount of new buildings, especially of houses and flats. Tirana, for example, is largely a new city planned for the needs of the people instead of growing anarchically. The new buildings are very beautiful and the streets broad and airy, another factor seen in other towns. It was marvellous to feel free of being run down by racing traffic. In the evenings the populace took to the streets for their traditional walkabout to meet and chat. Plenty of parks with recreation facilities are provided, with trees, flowers and benches. There is no sentiment for pre-liberation hovels - those which survive are scheduled either for demolition or as museum pieces. New workers' flats with brightly flowering plants on their balconies are everywhere. Practicality has not been allowed to dominate aesthetics. This does not mean that all the old buildings have been removed. Those that can be modernised are, and every effort is made to keep the character of particular areas. The people made a conscious decision not to build skyscraper blocks. Five-storey houses are generally the tallest, though some hotels (for foreigners) have been built higher. Shops, schools, kindergartens, reading halls, libraries and other facilities are all near at hand. From 1945 to 1975 two hundred and fifty thousand new flats had been built, enough to house the pre-war population. House building is also completed by volunteer labour consisting of both those needing the accommodation and those that are already settled. It shows the great solidarity of the people who strive towards self-sufficiency.

While visiting a cooperative farm some peasants invited us into their homes. We found them compact and well built, with good rugs on the floor, curtains and wallpaper. Generally very cosy and attractive dwellings. One felt that the people were building homes rather than boxes to eat and sleep in.

When the people achieved full electrification of the country years ahead of schedule, it greatly added to their living standards. Not only through the enormous boost to industrial production, but also for the comforts of the home with light and heat. Television is now found in even the remotest village. Albania, completely electrified, is ahead of other European countries who are still not in the same position.

With a population of just over two million, there is no policy of restraining the numbers in families. This does not mean couples are forced to have children or that workers do not limit their families to sensible numbers. To the Albanians their future lies in the youth and it must be a strong and healthy one. The old are encouraged not to become sedentary on retirement, but to involve themselves with the young, having much of value to give them. Both young and old benefit from the revolutionised health service that now flourishes there. Life expectancy has increased since liberation in 1944 from thirty-eight years to sixty-nine years today. Article 45 of the Constitution says "The State guarantees the citizens necessary medical services as well as treatment in the health centres of the country free of charge".

There are hospitals throughout the country backed up by clinics in every village. Prophylaxis, the protection of healthy people from disease, is the main aim of the health service. This means regular and thorough medical checks on everyone from babies through expectant mothers to old people. Vaccination campaigns have meant the eradication of killer diseases such as malaria, syphilis, tuberculosis, diphtheria, poliomyelitis etc. Alongside the vaccinations have come the education of the people in hygienic methods, the clearing of bad housing, draining of the swamps and the other pitfalls to disease. Health

education in general is given high priority and people are encouraged to see the doctor if anything worries them or at any sign of illness. Then the serious cases can be caught early and emergencies prevented.

Under Socialism women have seen a dramatic change in facilities for pregnancy and child rearing. As soon as she is confirmed pregnant a careful watch is kept on her and the baby's progress. The aim is to have all births attended by medical staff whether in the hospital or the home. Mother and baby enjoy special care and protection and paid leave before and after the birth. On returning to work, creches are provided and mothers are allowed time to breast feed during work hours. Women are now able to participate fully in the building of Socialism while also enjoying their children. To illustrate the advances, in 1938 there was only one fifteen-bed maternity ward, whereas by 1975 there were six hundred and thirty-eight wards and maternity houses. 100,000 children are looked after in creches every day.

Clinics are provided in the factories and special checks are given to workers in high risk jobs. Medical workers constantly tour these to see where improvements can be made. Attention and research is also given to diet. There is no shortage of doctors or of nurses in Albania. The ratio of nurses to patients is one nurse for every four children and one nurse for every eight adults. Doctors are continually involved with research while carrying on with the practical day-to-day routine. They are trained to treat people. we were told on a visit to Gjirokastra District Hospital, as "a most precious resource" not as "technical problems of disease." Prospective doctors must show a humanitarian spirit of social responsibility before being allowed to graduate. Technical skill in itself is insufficient. The death of even one person is regarded as a problem for all. If necessary the doctor has to account for his actions at a mass meeting which can mean a re-training session.

The hospital in Gjirokastra had four hundred and fifty beds and the maximum waiting time for a non-emergency operation

was three days. The staff found it difficult to comprehend the British system of waiting lists that could mean waiting for years. In emergencies a doctor can be flown from Tirana to the necessary destination. All the workers are very conscious of their important task, but did not wish to be exalted by extra pay and status. The hospital facilities were of a surprisingly high standard.

Albania cares about all its people. Provision for mental patients has been made virtually unnecessary with the security that a socialist society provides. Any cases that do occur are initially treated in hospital, but the real cure is found in the caring society that surrounds the patient at home. Handicapped children and adults, both mental and physical, are given the best provision and no expense is spared to help them recover to live as normal a life as possible. All life is precious in Socialist Albania.

Chapter 3

Education in Albania

The achievements and quality of any society can be best judged by the value it places on education. By this yardstick alone the Peoples Republic of Albania stands unequalled in Europe. The contrast between modern Albania and Albania prior to Liberation is staggering in this. To appreciate the advances made one must first consider the situation that prevailed when people's power was established.

The entire country had been devastated by the war. Entire areas had been ravaged by the invaders and any sense of normal life had ceased to exist. But even prior to this Albania was educationally the most backward country in Europe. It was the only country in Europe without a University, indeed higher and further education did not exist. 80 per cent of the population were illiterate and the percentage in the countryside even higher. This was the situation facing the new Democratic Government in 1944. In a speech delivered on Independence Day of that year Enver Hoxha said "today another page is being opened in our history, a page which it is in our power to write, and which we shall make as glorious as our war against the occupiers: this is the battle to reconstruct Albania, restore the economy, raise the culture and education of our people, and raise their social, economic and political level . . . it is vital for the entire people to become involved in this undertaking".

Under the slogan "Education for All" a campaign of reform was launched. Over the following four years, great strides were taken. Schooling was made free of charge and available to all the working masses. Whereas in 1938 there were 643 elementary schools attended by less than a quarter of school age children (the majority of whom did not complete the courses) in 1948 there were 1893 schools attended by 93 7 per

cent of school-age children. Additionally there were 107 7 year schools and 18 secondary schools. The first task had been achieved a national, secular state school system had been established as had been the principle of compulsory universal primary school attendance in town and countryside. Additionally there had been major progress in the fields of pre-school and part-time education.

The First Congress of the Communist Party of Albania was held in 1948. This year marked the beginning of the second stage in the development of education as a part of the Two Year Plan and from 1950 as a result of the decisions of the Second Congress, of the First Five Year Plan. Among the directives of the Plan was the following. "Solution of the problem of technical cadres and qualified workers demanded the further development and acceleration of the cultural revolution. During the first five year period the network of schools was to be greatly expanded, the total numbers of pupils was to be increased by 370 per cent over that of the year 1938, the number of economists more than five-fold and the number of engineers eighteen-fold. 8,500 technicians with secondary schooling and about 54 thousand qualified workers also were to be trained."

The objectives of the plan were successfully accomplished. Illiteracy among those under 40 years of age had been wiped out and the network of institutions of learning was satisfactorily extended. Methods of teaching had been improved and harmful survivals of the old influence had been combatted. Enver Hoxha described this as "a great victory for our Party and our people's state power" but went on to say "but there are serious shortcomings in our schools which must be done away with. The linking of theory with practice, of school with life is inadequate, and the students' knowledge is of quite an abstract and superficial character".

It was to these problems that Albania now turned. To improve the quality of education, to rid it of the superfluous and enhance its socialist nature. Major priority was to be given to part-time education and correspondence courses for

workers. Courses were to be geared both to the abolition of illiteracy among those over 40 and to the raising of the cultural level and professional skills of workers. Also as a part of the second Five Year Plan nurseries and kindergartens were to be increased by 183 per cent in comparison to 1955.

After the Third Congress the Albanian people turned to the application of the Plan and its objectives achieved. This despite the difficulties that beset them by the spread of the new revisionism and the degeneration in the Soviet Party. The conspiracies and intrigues of the Soviet leadership were aimed at the Albanian Party and State to deter it from its correct Marxist-Leninist stand. This interference served to unite the people with the Party in their opposition to Soviet revisionism and for the continuation of socialist construction in Albania.

It was in this period that the University of Tirana was established. Characteristically, in face of all these problems, the second Five Year Plan was fulfilled ahead of schedule. By 1960 twenty per cent of the population were attending school.

Since 1965 there has been a thorough going revolutionisation of education. The youth of the country have been trained to be revolutionaries, to reject bourgeois ideas of self-interest and careerism and place themselves at the service of the people and socialism. The objectives of the education system in Albania are clear:

- a) to impart scientific knowledge,
- b) to give professional skill and a correct attitude to work,
- c) to inculcate a Marxist-Leninist world outlook,
- d) to imbue socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

When we had the honour of visiting Albania it gave us great pleasure to see that these objectives are no mere slogans but a living reality. These principles and values permeate all aspects of life. To our mind it was this that marked the true success of Socialist Albania.

The education system is built on what they describe as the revolutionary triangle of learning, physical labour and military

training. The core of this triangle, its unity, is Marxism-Leninism. The success of this system is exhibited throughout the country.

Enver Hoxha says "life is a great school and school itself an integral part of life". This basic statement marks the essential nature of their education. Learning is not merely a matter of attending school. Pupils and students meet and discuss with workers, cadres and former partisans. They participate in manufacture and construction. We had the pleasure of visiting a railway construction site near Pogradec and seeing this in practice. Of the 1000 workers involved in this enterprise only three were paid specialists, the others youth volunteers. Up to that time over 13,000 young people had participated in this endeavour. They explained to us that the primary importance of this was political: to educate youth through activity.

The Albanians are conscious that their youth are their future and their future is socialism. Through involvement in physical labour the youth begin to truly appreciate the achievements of their country. It is always true that young people have a tendency to take for granted what they have. Albanian youth are trained to understand that the growing country they see around them is not there accidentally but only by the struggle, labour and sacrifice of the former generation.

The priority given to part-time education and correspondence courses is again indicative of this unity between labour and education. Every encouragement is given to workers to take advantage of these opportunities. For example workers involved in part-time study work a six rather than an eight hour day. But at no time is education meant to serve self-advancement. Enver Hoxha made this clear in the statement: "Our schools are not merely to provide additional personnel for Government and planning departments but to turn out, en masse, people equipped with knowledge to play their full role as socialist citizens".

In seeking to write about Albania and education there we have found it impossible to transmit the full extent of the impres-



sion it made upon us, the sense of progress, newness and comradeship that we experienced. Albania struck us not so much as a country but as a huge educational institution. People's lives are seen as a continual process of education. Where the well-being and development of the people are all important. The emphasis given to education and youth is a testimonial to the real achievement of Socialist Albania. The country that, alone in Europe, had no University, now has a higher proportion of its population in higher education than any other European country.

"Our state power knows that without a healthy, well educated youth, it would be short-lived; the youth too have understood that it is only with such state power that they can live and progress. Therefore the state power and the youth are closely and inseparably bound together. The state power has opened every door to the youth, and they should be the mainstay of every undertaking." Enver Hoxha, 1945.

Chapter 4

People's Society

Albania is a country which looks forward to a shining future of development and progress in all fields, because the foundations of that future are built, rock solid, in the working class, in the skills and creativity of the working class, in the leadership of the Party of Labour of Albania, a Party which belongs to the working class. And all this in a country which belongs to the working class, a society which is planned and built by the people. It is theirs.

The drafting of the New Constitution of Socialist Albania served to reinforce this principle. Nexhmije Hoxha, a member of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania, said in February 1976 that:

"This Marxist-Leninist document, of exceptional value for the present and future of the cause of socialism in our country, clearly shows the working class and the other working masses which it leads that the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat is theirs; that socialism is being built for them, that the prosperous present-day Albania, which will be still more prosperous in the future, belongs to them, therefore it mobilises them to guard it like the apple of their eye and strengthen it more and more. Thus the new Constitution is a sound weapon in the hands of our patriotic working people in their ceaseless advance towards the bright socialist and communist future to which our Party of Labour and its Central Committee with comrade Enver Hoxha at the head, are leading us with Marxist-Leninist wisdom and unwavering determination."

This document had been and was being discussed all over Albania while we were there, and it enshrines many of the features of the socialist organisation and life of the country which we learned about and saw. For example Article 5 says:

"All state power in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania derives from and belongs to the working people."

The people exercise their state power both directly and through their representative organs which are elected through universal suffrage with equal, direct and secret voting. The people have the right to recall their representative at any time when he has lost their political trust or does not fulfill the tasks he is charged with or breaks the law. Officials serve the people, participate directly in work in production and are paid salaries in fair ratio with those of the workers and cooperativists in order to prevent the development of a privileged elite.

Socialism is being built in Albania on the basis of a fundamental unity between the Party of Labour and the people. Everywhere we went, everyone we talked to only served to reinforce this principle. That under Marxist-Leninist leadership, the Party and the people are one, unified. The people themselves have taken hold of their own destiny, planning all aspects of the life and development of the society. Everyone in Albania is involved in building socialism. Everywhere in Albania we were very aware of the activity of building socialism, not least of all by the slogans which proliferate on buildings, on hoardings, carved into mountain sides, built into walls and pavements in coloured pebbles, in the factories, the towns, the countryside. Everywhere. Often the slogans express the great unity and love between the people and the Party and in particular the love for Enver Hoxha. And often the slogans are more precise. The first such one we saw was near the border in the north. We had just arrived and been met and were being entertained to a glass of cognac, a cup of coffee, an orange drink, some biscuits and chocolate. On the wall of the room was a sentence which read:

"Liberalism and indifference have no place in our country." And we found for the rest of our visit that, far from being an exhortation, that was merely a statement of fact. No-one can be indifferent to the building of socialism, and no-one can be liberal, either with themselves or with others in achieving the aim of socialism. In a people's society everyone contributes

as much as he can in the drives to increase production, to develop the technical base, to reduce imports and increase exports.

Such aims as these, which are being readily met, depend on the work of all people, indeed Article 42 states that the right to work is guaranteed by the State. Work is a duty and an honour for every able-bodied citizen. But at the same time the people are cherished and cared for in work: for example, in the Mao Tse Tung Textile Mill in Berat the noise levels in some sections are quite high, the law provides that any worker in danger of suffering is moved. In the dyeing section the workers handle dangerous chemicals and so receive higher pay, longer holidays, regular medical check-ups, early retirement and frequent breaks with nourishing milk to drink.

While at work, the people themselves are in control of production and development, of discipline and behaviour. We saw examples of this in the cooperatives, the factories and the hospital which we visited. For example, in the Mao Tse Tung Textile Mill all Trade Union members discuss the economic and social problems, the figures of the current and next five-year plans and take initiatives in improving production. Likewise, in conversation with cooperativists in Berat, we again found that all the workers are involved in discussions of both annual and 5-year plans. The discussions begin in the smallest organisational units of the workers, the teams, who put forward technical measures for production. The suggestions and discussions then go to sector level, then cooperative level, after which they return to the team level and thence to the executive committee of the district. At the head of this democratic process through which the people determine their own work patterns and production levels, is the Party.

And after work the people are also cared for. Article 43 states that citizens enjoy the right of rest after work and that rest homes, houses of culture and other centres of this kind are created and put in the service of the working class, the people. Likewise invalids, old people and orphans are taken

special care of, all medical services are guaranteed and free, and mother and child enjoy special solicitude and protection. The State also guarantees the inviolability of the person, his house and his correspondence.

Such are the rights of the Albanian people, but these rights are inseparable from and dependent upon their duties also. Article 61 states that:

"The defence of the socialist homeland is the supreme duty and the greatest honour for all citizens."

Article 62 elaborates on this:

"Military service and the constant training for the defence of the socialist homeland are duties for all the citizens."

In a people's society, the defence of that society is also incumbent upon all the people. It was emphasised to us that the defence of the country is based on the principle of self-reliance. This is not to say that internationalist aid would be refused, but merely that the Albanians are quite aware that, in the event of war, the decisive force will be the people themselves, because the only sure defence is an independent one. This is achieved through the military preparation and organisation of the entire people. Everyone is armed, everyone is militarily trained. The army and the people are integrated. An army separate from the people is not known. There is a limited number of armed forces, but the armament of the whole people is one of the most important expressions of socialism, for nothing can be imposed on an armed people. In everything, including military defence of the country, reliance is put on the people. They have a slogan which says, "Two million people, two million soldiers". And that is exactly how it is.

In a weapons museum in the castle of Gjirokastra, toward the south of the country, there is a quotation taken from a writer in the time of Skanderbeg, the great Albanian hero and patriot of the fifteenth century. This quotation says:

"The Albanians stand with a plough in one hand and a weapon in the other". And this is echoed today, five centuries later, in the revolutionary slogan of the Party of Labour of Albania:

"To build socialism holding a pickaxe in one hand and a rifle in the other". And this really does sum up what the Albanian people under the leadership of the Party, are doing, and the spirit in which it is being done. They are working to build socialism and they are defending it from attack at the same time. But the building and the defence are not only in an economic sense, but also, very much, in an ideological sense too.

In a factory in Gjirokastra, which produced all the cutlery for Albania and washing machines, scissors, zips, taps, umbrellas and other things, we met a Hero of Socialist Labour, and, although he did not want to talk about it, we did because we wanted to know what he had done to gain such a great honour. Other workers told us that he had always been an advanced worker, an activist, that the young workers had all learned from him, that he was Secretary of the Party Bureau in the factory, and that he had introduced innovations in the factory, which included a machine for making steel pipes which he had designed and made himself. His only comment on all this was: "It's not really my merit, but the merit of all the collective and the Party organisation which have helped me." In that one man, it seemed, were displayed the basic elements on which socialism is built: a worker who was ideologically and politically clear and prepared and active, a good worker who, by his own efforts had improved production, helped by the other workers and by the Party organisation.

In one of his speeches Enver Hoxha said that:

"Socialism cannot be built by a minority alone, not even by the Party; it is built by the millions-strong masses of the people led by the Party."

Unlike other revolutions in history, the socialist revolution does not end, but only begins with the seizure of state power by the working class.

In the building of socialism, the Albanians firmly believe that the decisive factor is the internal one, the colossal force of the people. There is no aspect of Albanian society which does



Enver Hoxha meeting Albanian workers

not belong to the people or reflect their aspirations and their needs. This extends to another important aspect - the mass media. As an example of this, consider 'Zeri I Popullit', the newspaper which is the organ of the Central Committee of the Party of Labour of Albania. This newspaper in its organisation and its content is thoroughly immersed in and controlled by the working class of the country.

Eighty per cent of the contributions to the paper come from the people and not from professional journalists. There are volunteer correspondents in every district and enterprise in the country, as well as regular correspondents approved by the local Party organisations. Enver Hoxha especially advised the

Editorial Board of 'Zeri I Popullit' to take care of volunteer correspondents, because they are the ones who actually live with and experience the events they write about. In these ways the content of the paper comes from the people themselves.

In addition, letters received are treated with particular respect, and are used in the paper regularly as an important feature. The letters are used singly, verbatim or in groups or are added together in an article or as the basis for an article. They are also used in other ways: for example, when a new series of school textbooks was recently published, 'Zeri I Popullit' opened a campaign of letters from teachers, parents and children and so encouraged debate amongst all the people about an issue vitally important to everyone, for in the education of the children lies the future of Albania. On the same theme, a letter to the paper from a chemistry teacher in Korca convincingly criticising new textbooks began a series of letters and a debate which, for the paper, concluded with an editorial article. In this also is the working class in command.

In Albania we saw a people who are secure because they rely on their own efforts, who are proud of their incredible advances and achievements; we saw fields and mountains blossoming, children who will never be unemployed, a nation proud of its history of struggle and proud of its future also. A society in which the wellbeing of the people is primary and is in the hands of the people themselves.

As Article 1 of the new Constitution states:

"Albania is a People's Socialist Republic."

Book Review

Enver Hoxha Selected Works Vol: I, Vol: II

It seems almost impertinent to attempt such a summary review of the first two volumes of the English translation of the Selected Works of Enver Hoxha.* The material covered deals with the most important part of Albanian history - its independence from fascism and colonial exploitation and then the exciting road to socialist advance: and being written by the architect of much of Albania's revolutionary planning and its implementation, bears a special significance. Hoxha writes clearly and his exposition is always easy to follow. He also has a lovely habit of combining high Marxist analysis with the most down-to-earth remarks about people - Party cadres, bigwigs or humble people.

Volume 1 is divided into two parts, the first part dealing with Hoxha's many reports about the conduct of the national liberation war against fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Mobilising the peasantry, fighting the reactionary nationalists who were being backed by Britain and also trying to root out disruptive pseudo-revolutionaries who "parrot communist slogans" but are more dangerous than the overt enemy (p. 93)- Hoxha's Report to the Central Committee of the Albanian Communist Party in February 1943 is an important contribution for all those anxious to apply Marxism-Leninism to problems of national liberation.

The second part deals with the seizure of power and the establishment of the Democratic Government of Albania, later the People's Republic of Albania. For British readers particular interest will surely lie in the way in which the Albanians had to fight the manoeuvres of British imperialism and then Anglo-

* Vol I (Nov 1941 - Oct 1948) pp 850

Vol II (Nov 1948 - Nov 1960) pp 879 (Both available from Bellman Bookshop, price £1 50 each.)

American imperialism which used overt military means as well as covert sabotage and intrigue against the revolutionary forces to bring back reactionary elements. Later the debacle of the then Labour Government's attempt to force warships into Albanian waters, ships which sank after hitting mines placed by the fascist forces, are interesting side-shows to the main story of an infant socialist state having to fight enemies on all fronts, including the defection of erstwhile ally, Yugoslavia, when the latter degenerated into an anti-communist Trotskyite base for US imperialism. Hoxha's speech to Tirana activists in October 1948 is one of the fullest analyses of Tito's revisionism and counter-revolutionary work against the socialist bloc in those post-war years.

Volume II deals with the fascinating story of building socialism in a semi-feudal land and transforming "a backward agrarian country into an agrarian-industrial one" (p. 507) with industry as its base. Hoxha's Reports to the first and second Party Congresses in 1948 and 1952 are interesting accounts of socialist construction in all spheres of life - agriculture, industrialisation, education, culture. But what is more remarkable than the plans for changing the very face of a tiny country into a modern thriving workers' state is the political prescience shown by Hoxha and the Albanian Party. Long before any talk of cultural revolutions to safeguard socialist ideology and prevent the decline into revisionism, Hoxha was talking of the importance of socialist education and class consciousness because the class struggle is not diminished but rather intensified with the advent of socialism. The Report made at the third Party Congress in 1956 is particularly good on this and not surprising as it came shortly after the twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union where Khrushchev and his fellow renegades had begun the process of dismantling the Bolshevik state erected by Lenin and Stalin. Ideas which today have received much prominence because of the proletarian cultural revolution initiated in China by Mao in 1966 were being discussed by Enver in these early days - the need to revitalise the Party, get rid of

its bad features such as bureaucratisation, all kinds of personal weaknesses of cadres - the need to forge links with the mass and the Party by making leaders give up their comfortable jobs and do the hard tasks in the countryside the need to develop socialist consciousness and ideals through socialist and not capitalist emulation among workers and the peasantry.

Reading Hoxha enables one to realise why Albania did not follow the road of its east European neighbours which today are in the morass of revisionism and firmly in Russia's clutches. Hoxha can take much of the credit for saving Albania from such a fate. It is therefore no surprise to find that it was he who took up the challenge of Russia's defection from Marxism and made that brave and brilliant speech attacking Khrushchevian revisionism right in the lion's den - in Moscow during the World Conference of Communist Parties, 1960. All of us would do well to study this piece with which volume II ends, for our present world shows an even greater need for ideological clarity.

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